Central and Eastern Europe

Commercial Update

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Central and Eastern Europe's Dynamic Energy Market Offers Many Opportunities for U.S. Firms

by Michael Rogers, Central and Eastern Europe Business Information Center

At the start of the new century, Central and Eastern Europe is facing new energy challenges. This includes: (1) securing affordable power supplies that are able to accommodate growing economies; (2) the need for wider private sector participation in the energy sector; (3) greater integration of domestic energy industries into regional structures; (4) and the development of environmentally friendly policies and strategies that comply with stringent international and European norms. This dynamic environment is full of opportunity for a wide range of U.S. firms with expertise in areas such as plant management, environmental technology, logistics, and engineering.

The energy sectors of individual countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are in varying stages of development and reform. Therefore, each country presents a unique set of opportunities for U.S. firms. Nevertheless, there are two crosscutting commercial policy objectives that are driving this wide-scale sectoral reform. First, as part of the continued economic transition begun over a decade ago, the region's national governments are pursuing policies of economic growth. Second, they are also pursuing a policy of economic integration with international and regional institutions such as the European Union (EU).

As part of the EU accession process, these aspiring CEE countries are required to adopt the *acquis communautaire*, the common body of law in the European Union. The principal objectives of energy reform as it relates to the EU accession process include the creation of a single energy market. In practice that means that accession candidate states must take steps to ensure transparency of prices to final consumers and to facilitate transit of resources from Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, and the Newly Independent States to the markets of Western Europe.

The commercial opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe's energy sector fall into two major categories: the privatization of state-owned assets, and the upgrade of existing facilities and infrastructure as well as the construction of new facilities.

The following country profiles describe the current opportunities in some of the region's individual markets.

Albania

Albania benefits from an abundant supply of hydropower. There are currently eight major hydroelectric facilities that account for 95 percent of the country's power generation. At present the hydro facilities produce about 3.6 billion kilowatt hours per year. This is significantly below the projected capacity of 16 billion kilowatt hours per year. The Albanian government is exploring ways to develop this unrealized potential.

However, the Albanian energy sector has many problems that it must overcome. Power supplies are restricted and unpredictable. With no price controls, badly organized distribution, and public unwillingness to pay for substandard service, about 50 percent of all electricity is not paid for. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the World Bank are currently financing a number of initiatives to help improve Albania's power generating infrastructure.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina's total power generation capacity is 3,867 megawatts. There are 13 hydro electric plants that generate 52 percent of the country's electricity. The

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Eye on Southeast Europe

Ex-Im Bank in Southeast Europe

by Margaret Kostic, Export-Import Bank

The Export Import Bank (Ex-Im Bank) is an independent U.S. government agency that helps finance the sale of U.S. exports primarily to emerging markets throughout the world, by providing loans, guarantees, and insurance. The Ex-Im Bank supported \$15.5 billion in U.S. exports in fiscal year 2000.

In Southeast Europe, the Ex-Im Bank is cooperating with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (TDA) in reconstruction efforts and in promoting trade between U.S. companies, governments, and private businesses in the region. In June 2000, the Ex-Im Bank announced its decision to intensify its efforts in Southeast Europe by establishing a presence in the region, along with OPIC and TDA, in Zagreb, Croatia. Although the Ex-Im Bank does not have a full time representative in Zagreb, as do OPIC and TDA, Ex-Im's director for Southeast Europe, Margaret Kostic, and other Ex-Im Bank officials travel frequently to the region to inform and advise government officials, commercial banks, and buyers on the Ex-Im Bank's programs. Ex-Im has also planned a series of seminars and conferences both in the region and in the United States focused specifically on Southeast Europe.

Over the past five years, the Ex-Im Bank has supported approximately \$1 billion in U.S. exports to the region. The Bank's most active markets are Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania. The bank has also supported projects in Macedonia, and looks forward to doing business in Bosnia-Hercegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. On August 9, 2001, the Ex-Im Bank announced it was opening all of its programs in Albania, and has already witnessed substantial interest among U.S. exporters in this market. As stability and prosperity in the region grow, there is significant potential for increased activity. Financing is a key component for most transactions in this part of the world, and the Ex-Im Bank is ready and willing to assist.

In Croatia, the Ex-Im Bank has supported major infrastructure projects, including road construction, power, transportation, and communication projects. In Bulgaria,

the Ex-Im Bank is financing the upgrade and modernization of the Kozloduy Nuclear Power Plant. And in Romania, the bank has been active in many sectors and projects — weather radar equipment, large commercial aircraft, and medical equipment, to name a few. Whereas most of the transactions supported to date have been in the public sector, the bank is expanding its outreach efforts to the private sector, because it is the development of the private sector that will lead to future growth and stability in the region. The Ex-Im Bank is also first considering highly structured transactions, and views these in some cases, as viable options to sovereign (or bank) guarantees.

In an effort to further expand its activities in the region, The Ex-Im Bank has entered into Memoranda of Understanding with the Slovenian Export Corporation and the Hungarian Export-Import Bank aimed at jointly financing projects involving exports from both the U.S. and the respective countries. The Ex-Im Bank is also actively marketing its new municipal lending (or subsovereign) program in Southeast Europe. Two cities — Zagreb, Croatia, and Sofia, Bulgaria — are rated by international credit rating agencies, and qualify for support under this program without a guarantee from the sovereign.

The Ex-Im Bank will be arranging several conferences in the region and in the United States over the next year. On October 29, 2001, The Ex-Im Bank's chairman and president, John E. Robson, will host the first in a series of regional conferences. The conference will be held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, at Hotel Croatia and is aimed at U.S. companies interested in pursuing contracts and investments in Southeast Europe. The conference will also include presentations by the Foreign Commercial Service, OPIC, and TDA representatives.

For more information on the Ex-Im Bank's programs in Southeast Europe and/or future conference information, please contact:

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remaining 48 percent is generated by four coal burning facilities.

The World Bank and other co-financiers, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), are planning to invest \$231.1 million over the next three years in reconstruction of the electric power sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina

This multilateral effort is a continuation of the ongoing energy reconstruction program and ensures access to reliable, lower cost electricity, to be supplied with reduced environmental and safety risks, and improved cost recovery by suppliers. It is expected to be completed within a three-year period from October 1, 2001, through September 30, 2004. The beneficiaries of this effort are the three electric power companies Elektroprivreda Bosnia and Herzegovina (EPBiH), Elektroprivreda of the Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosnia (EPHZHB), and Elektroprivreda Republika Srpska (EPRS), and the Joint Power Coordination Center (ZEKC).

Bulgaria

Bulgaria's power generating infrastructure is comprised of nuclear, conventional, thermo-electric, and hydroelectric facilities. Nuclear power accounts for 40 percent of electricity. Conventional power generation is fueled mainly by domestically produced coal. Under a comprehensive reform plan, Bulgaria's energy sector is now undergoing reconstruction to be followed by privatization. The adoption of the Energy and Energy Efficiency Act in July 1999 accelerated power sector reform by providing the regulatory and legal framework for the market-based development of energy sector.

Under that plan, the state-owned electric company, NEK, has been divided into separate companies for generation, transmission, and distribution prior to privatization. Electric power price reform is underway and will be accompanied by regulatory oversight. The State Agency for Energy and Energy Sources will regulate prices until December 31, 2001. After that period, the new State Commission on Energy Regulation will take over the monitoring of the market and the issuance of operating licenses for generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity. Moreover, there will be a second round of World Bank loans for supply-side efficiency improvements.

Related energy legislation enacted with the Energy Act requires heat allocators and thermostats to be installed on

radiators in residences. The legislation also allows for independent heat providing agents to be hired by heat and electricity providers to better measure heating and electricity use and collect charges from residential and business customers. Additionally, privatization of the district heating substations is being considered, in order to make it possible to effectively implement this new approach to bill collection.

Croatia

The Ministry of Economy is the lead government agency for developing and implementing Croatia's energy policy reform. The goal of the reform is to enable and regulate competition according to European Union (EU) directives and provides the basis for privatization of the Croatian Electric Company, the Croatian Oil and Gas Company, and the Adriatic Pipeline. The privatization process is expected to begin sometime in 2002.

The liberalization of the electricity market, which is scheduled to begin in 2002, will start with the largest consumers (over 40 gwh/year). Major consumers will be allowed to negotiate directly with suppliers. There are about 15 such consumers in Croatia. Foreign companies will be permitted to act as suppliers, providing that they are registered and licensed for this business activity in Croatia. It is expected that within the next few years, the 4O- gwh/

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Central and Eastern European Commercial Update

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Central and Eastern Europe Commercial Opportunities

Bulgaria

MMC Inc., a heating and air conditioning company established 1990, has 22 employees and annual turnover of approximately \$855,000. In 2000, the company started working on a project for building a nationwide network of heating systems using solar energy. The equipment will be installed in commercial and residential buildings. MMC is seeking a U.S. supplier and/or investor. The total amount for the investment is \$200,000.

Contact: Mr. Boncho Bonev, Managing Director & CEO

MMC Inc.

2 N. Mihailovsky Street 9002 Varna, Bulgaria Tel.:+359(52)257-000 Fax:+359(52)231-240 e-mail: b.bonev@mmc.bg

Submitted by Georgi Peev, CEEBIC trade specialist

Slovakia

Zvolenska Hydina is a private company with 420 employees founded in 1997. The company processes and produces poultry, poultry products, and other meat products. It plans to increase its production and is interested in making investments in a new technology for poultry processing and in facilities for disposal of waste from production. The company is seeking a joint venture partner and is also interested in American technology and know-how.

Contact: Mr. Martin Krchnak Head of Marketing Department Zvolenska Hydina, s.r.o. Lieskovska cesta 23 96 001 Zvolen Slovakia

Tel: +421 (45) 536- 1629 Fax: +421 (45) 536 9277

INGAS is a private company with 45 employees. It has been in business for 10 years and its main activity is pipeline construction. These pipelines are used for the distribution of water, heat, and gas. INGAS is planning to expand its business activity to include the production of a wide range of products made from iron sheets. These products will be manufactured using laser technology. INGAS is seeking a joint-venture partner or investor for this endeavor.

Contact: Mr. Jozef Ocvar

INGAS

Podnikatelska 8

040 17 Kosice Slovakia Tel: 421 (55) 678-8751

Fax: 421 (55) 678-8625

Dom Techniky ZSVTS is a limited liability corporation with 109 employees. Its provides logistic support for conferences, exhibitions, and seminars. The company plans to build an exhibition complex and is seeking a joint-venture partner or an investor.

Contact: Mr. Igor Kozak Director Dom Techniky ZSVTS Juzna trieda 2/A 040 01 Kosice Slovakia

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Submitted by Dusana Bartkova, CEEBIC trade specialist

CEEBIC Launches a New E-mail Publication

The Slovak Commercial Quarterly

This free publication of the U.S. Department of Commerce provides U.S. firms with the latest commercial information and trade leads for the Slovak market.

To subscribe, e-mail CEEBIC at CEEBIC@ita.doc.gov.

To learn more about CEEBIC's other free e-mail publications, the *Southeast Europe Business Brief* and the *Central Europe and Norther Tier Business Brief*, visit the publication section of CEEBICnet at www.mac.doc.gov/eebic/

ceebic.html

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year-limit will be gradually reduced as market competition develops and will ultimately disappear, allowing all consumers to benefit from a free market.

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic has focused on diversifying its energy resources. Reliance on coal has been declining in favor of natural gas and nuclear energy. A new pipeline connection to Germany and a long-term agreement with Norway to supply natural gas greatly reduces the country's dependence on traditional energy suppliers in Russia and the Newly Independent States. It is expected that the government will now focus on the environmental aspects of energy production to make it compliant with EU regulations.

New energy legislation adopted in late 2000 outlines the framework for the privatization of the Czech energy sector. Under the current plan, full liberalization is not expected until 2007. However, large consumers will be able to start choosing suppliers in 2002.

Estonia

Estonia has sufficient resources to meet its current energy needs. This includes abundant domestic fuel resources, infrastructure for natural gas and liquid fuel imports, and a well-developed national power system for the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity. Active oil shale deposits amount to about 1,200 million tons and, at current levels of consumption, are forecasted to last a hundred years. Current production capacity of its oil shale mines exceeds Estonia's predicted domestic demand in the coming decades.

The long-term electricity consumption forecast shows that Estonia's domestic consumption will remain moderate in the near future, with a maximum of 2-3 percent annual increase. Any expansion in the power market will be through increased export, for which Estonia possesses the technical capabilities. Powerful transmission lines linking Estonia with Russia and Latvia make possible both electricity export to, and transit through, these regions. However, export to these countries has been limited due to low demand in Latvia and Russia. In addition to Russia and Latvia, Finland is among Estonia's potential electric power export markets due to the relatively low price of Estonian electricity.

F.R. Yugoslavia

F.R. Yugoslavia has a current installed energy capacity of 10,410 megawatts. Coal-fired plants produce about 70

percent of the country's electricity with the other 30 percent coming from hydro power. F.R. Yugoslavia has nearly 13 billion tons of exploitable lignite reserves and nearly 7,000 gigawatts of hydro potential. The country's primary infrastructure was largely neglected during the 1990s and existing plants are based on U.S. technology from the 1950s. However, if these resources are properly developed and managed, F.R. Yugoslavia could begin to export electricity again as early as 2002–2003.

Two state-run companies, Elektroprivreda of Serbia (EPS) and Elektroprivreda of Montenegro, carry out the majority of F.R. Yugoslavia's electricity generation and distribution. However, the government recently announced plans to privatize the power sector within the next two years. Current prices are kept low by the Ministry of Trade, in order to subsidize all parts of the economy, but an agreement is in place to raise prices to cover increasing costs and bring a reasonable profit to the sector. Recently, the F.R. Yugoslav Investment/Trade Promotion Agencies have outlined nine future energy sector projects including the refurbishment of the Tesla Power Plant and a preliminary study of the hydropower potential of the Tara and Moraca rivers. The total value of the nine proposed projects is estimated to be over \$750 million. The complete list of proposed projects is available on the Central and Eastern Europe Business Information Center's Web site at www.mac.doc.gov/eebic.ceebic.html.

F.Y.R. Macedonia

At present, electricity services are provided by the stateowned F.Y.R. Macedonian electric company. A thermal plant in Bitola supplies 70 percent of the country's energy. Other power-generating facilities include two additional coal/oil thermo-power facilities and 15 hydropower installations.

With the goal of entering the European Union, the F.Y.R. Macedonian government has been working to restructure and liberalize the country's electricity market. Discussions are currently underway on how best to achieve this goal. Significant reform and privatization, however, is not expected until after 2002.

Hungary

Hungary has a well-developed and largely privatized energy system. In the power sector, a former monopoly, the state-owned National Grid Company (MVM) is responsible for the export, import, wholesaling, high voltage transmission, and dispatching of electricity generated by

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independent power plants and the state-owned Paks Nuclear Power Plant. Six foreign-owned regional electric utilities buy power from MVM and carry out retail activities including billing.

In the oil and gas sector, the 25 percent state-owned Hungarian Oil and Gas Company (MOL) has a monopoly for gas and oil exploration, transmission, stockpiling, and wholesale trade. Hungary is a massive importer of oil and gas from Russia, while it is a net power exporter to surrounding markets. The country's major energy resources for power generation are nuclear and hydrocarbon fuels. Regional gas distribution companies have also been privatized to mainly European strategic investors.

The Hungarian Oil and Gas Co. (MOL), Hungary's largest company was privatized in several steps between 1994 – 1998, with the Hungarian State retaining a 25 percent stake. In addition, the Hungarian government mandates retail gas prices. MOL controls about 35 percent of the fuel retail market and owns the majority of the pipeline and storage infrastructure in Hungary. As part of its regional expansion policy, in 2001 MOL bought a 36 percent share of the Slovak oil and gas company, Slovnaft, with an option to buy a majority stake at a later date.

In 2000, the Hungarian government decided to start liberalizing the power and the gas markets in a step-by-step process as Hungary draws nearer to the EU. As a first step, in January 2002, the 15 biggest consumers of electricity will be able to buy power from generators directly through MVM as a transporter. Further steps of the envisaged 10-year liberalization process are currently under discussion.

Latvia

The Latvian electricity market is dominated by the integrated state monopoly, Latvenergo. A 1998 energy law provided for the privatization of the state-owned company. However, this process has not moved forward.

Lithuania

Lithuania's electricity sector falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Economy. Lithuanian Energy operates all major generating, transmission, and distribution assets with the exception of two combined heat and power plants in Vilnius and Kaunas. An energy law passed in May 2000 provides for the privatization of Lithuanian Energy. Reforms will include the unbundling of generation, transmission, and distribution services.

Poland

During the last 10 years, the electrical power sector in Poland has been gradually liberalized. The electrical power sector consists of three main systems. First, the power generators, including system power plants, combined heat and power plants, and local energy producers with a total installed capacity of 34,255 megawatts. Second, the high-voltage transmission system operated by Polish Power Grid Company (PPGC). Third, the distribution system consisting of 33 electric distribution utilities and new companies created according to the Energy Law.

The Energy Law of 1997 created the legal framework for liberalization of the power sector and creation of a competitive energy market. The key provisions of the 1997 law included a solid legal framework, defining the rights and duties of producers, distributors, and users of energy, and the establishment of an independent regulatory entity (URE) responsible for granting licenses, approving tariffs and ensuring competition within the energy sector. The law also introduced third party access (TPA) of enterprises to energy distribution grids, provided that third parties produce energy domestically and meet contractual and governmental obligations. Full liberalization of Polish electrical power market is expected by 2005.

Romania

Romania's energy policy has been an important component of the reform measures passed during the past decade. Two main categories of enterprises function in the energy sector: the Regies Autonomes (RAs) for the production and supply of energy products, and the Commercial Companies (CCs) that ensure support services and other activities. The Regies Autonomes are state holding companies operating in strategic sectors, such as electric power, oil, natural gas, lignite, and coal. The CCs are joint stock enterprises established under the commercial law.

The World Bank, EBRD, the European Investment Bank (EIB), and USAID are financing a \$363.9 million power sector reform project aimed at meeting the demand for electricity by rehabilitating thermal generation capacity. This will be accomplished by financing the transfer of equipment, services, and technical assistance. In addition the Romanian Ministry of Industry and Resources has published a list of projects for potential foreign investors, including a \$500 million investment for the completion of the Cernavoda 2 nuclear reactor and a \$35 million project

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for the development hydropower resources. A complete list of potential projects is available on the Central and Eastern Europe Business Information Center's Web site at www.mac.doc.gov/eebic.ceebic.html.

Slovakia

Slovakia is a strategic transit country for Russian gas to the European Union. In 2000 the Slovak government began to institute market reform. Market liberalization is a key component of Slovakia's accession negotiations with the European Union. As a result, the government has taken steps to establish an independent regulatory body and privatize the country's power company, gas company, and gas pipeline.

Slovenia

Slovenia's European Union aspirations have resulted in progress toward a more open economy in many sectors, including electricity. Slovenia is working on solving bilateral issues with Croatia including the Krsko nuclear power plant, which supplies energy for both countries. The agreement with Croatia over Krsko will reduce Slovenia's electricity supply significantly, forcing the government of Slovenia to further liberalize the electricity market to allow trading companies to import electricity. The government also consolidated hydroelectric, steam power plants, and coal mines into the new holding Slovenske Elektrarne, of which the government owns 79.5 percent. These moves will present opportunities for U.S. energy trading firms, but reduce competition in power generation in the medium term.

U.S. Government Assistance for U.S. Firms

The U.S. Department of Commerce has a number of resources for U.S. companies interested in Central and Eastern Europe's energy sector. The Central and Eastern Europe Business Information Center (CEEBIC) is available to assist U.S. firms interested in pursuing opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe. To contact CEEBIC, call (202) 482-2645, fax (202) 482-3898, e-mail ceebic@ita.doc.gov, or the World Wide Web at www.mac.doc.gov/eebic.ceebic.html. Firms may also wish to contact the Department of Commerce's Trade Development Office of Energy at (202) 482-4436 or fax (202) 482-0170 or the U.S. Commercial Service abroad. A complete list of Commercial Service offices in Central and Eastern Europe is available on the Internet at www.usatrade.gov.

Calendar of Events

November

11/2 – 11/4 The 2001 Eighth Annual CIS and Eastern Europe Business Forum Focusing on

Success in the CIS and Eastern Europe, University of Arizona, McClleland Hall. Tucson, Arizona Contact: tel. (520) 626-4007 or e-mail roza@dakotacom.net

11/22 – 11/23 Romanian Interntional Oil, Gas, and Energy Conference and Showcase (RIOGE 2001), Bucharest, Romania.

Contact: Barbu Popescu, tel. +40 (1) 313-6434 or e-mail iter@sx.ro

For a more complete list of events, go to CEEBICnet, www.mac.doc.gov/eebic/ceebic.html.

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